

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee

EXHIBIT 20
DATE 1/25/2011
HB

Hello. My name is Shawna Mickel.

Thank you for lending an ear to consider this appropriation bill.

The Brain Injury Help Line is a benefit for all Montanans. This is a program that follows the patient after leaving the hospital after a brain injury. It is a great support to the families of the patient. They can answer questions on how to deal with the memory loss, the sense of confusion, and not understanding why things aren't the way they used to be. It was hard for me because I could remember my childhood, but I could not remember how to comb my hair, put on make-up or take a shower.

The help line helps the patient by making 6-8 calls in the 2 years after getting out of the hospital. The major benefit for the patient is it gives them someone to talk to that understands brain injuries. They can listen and give feedback with recommendations on what might help the patient. These are different for every caller some can be to physical therapy, psychiatric help or something as simple as peer support from the brain injury support group. We have a support group here in Helena and in most of the large cities in the state of Montana.

I'd like to share my personal story with you.

My first brain surgery was on April 2, 1996, and the second surgery was six days later. The colloid cyst in the third right ventricle of my brain was being stubborn and gave the doctors problems. Nine months later I needed another surgery. This time the craniotomy removed the colloid cyst.

I know I'm giving you a lot of personal information but there is a reason for it.

When I was released from the hospital all three times, I was given NO aftercare, no medication, no physical therapy, no psychiatric therapy and no recommendations for peer support. Now, 15 years later I am in the last phases of physical therapy for the left side of my body.

If I had received help at the time of release from the hospital it probably would have saved the taxpayers a lot of money. I was put in 3 mental institutions

because when you have as many surgeries as I did and no aftercare, the memory loss and multiple problems result in psychiatric disorders.

I am grateful for the help I receive now from this organization and the other services that are given to the brain injured.

My life would not have turned around without the help of the doctors, the medication, the support group, the Help Line , the physical therapy and the psychiatric therapy. The Brain Injury Help Line helps people with a brain injury get in touch with all the services that are so important for improved outcomes.

In retrospect, the Help Line is a benefit to all Montanans with a brain Injury, who, without it would be left with almost no way to get information and referrals.

I urge you to support the funding for the Brain Injury Help Line.

Thank you for your time.

Shawna Mickel

Helena Brain Injury Support Group